GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2594
ANSWERED ON:31.07.2002
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AIDS
C. SREENIVAASAN;M.H. AMBAREESH

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the International Conference to control AIDS was held in New Delhi on 11-12 May, 2002;

(b) if so, the countries which participated in this Conference;

(c) the decision taken in the Conference to control AIDS; and

(d) the progress made by the Government in the field of development of anti-AIDS vaccines or drugs vis-Ã -vis other countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a) & (b) Yes, Sir. The International PolicymakersConference on HIV/AIDSwas held in New Delhi on 11-12th May, 2002. Besides India, the countries which participated in the conference were: South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Thailand, Nepal, Chaina and Brazil.

(c) The participating countries endorsed the Delhi Declaration, enumerating their commitments to address the complexities and challenges presented by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The main features of the Delhi Declaration are:
(i) to inform, educate, communicate and develop strategies, working closely with affected countries, to promote effective AIDS prevention initiatives;
(ii) to identify and begin to address those factors that make individuals particularly vulnerable to HIV infection, including under development, poverty, illiteracy, lack of empowerment of women, and all types of sexual exploitation;
(iii) to promote social acceptance and respect for the dignity and rights of all people affected by HIV/AIDS and to oppose all forms of stigma and discrimination;
(iv) to make every effort to provide progressively and in a sustainable manner, the highest attainable standard of treatment and care to people living with HIV/AIDS;
(v) to support research and development of AIDS vaccines and other prevention technologies, keeping in mind the pressing needs of the developing world;
(vi) to create an enabling environment and build capacity among policymakers in respective countries, and in particular, seek to strengthen legislation and regulatory systems and procedures;
(vii) to mobilize political commitment at national, regional and global levels; and
(viii) to promote collaborative efforts among Governments, peoples` representatives, private industry, international agencies and nongovernmental organization to move forward the commitments made in this Declaration.

(d) The best long term hope for controlling the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a safe, effective and affordable preventive vaccine, but its development has encountered unprecedented scientific challenges. More than 30 candidate vaccines have been tested in over 60 phase I/II trials, involving thousands of healthy volunteers. Most of these trials have been conducted in the USA and Europe, but several have also been conducted in developing countries including Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, Kenya, Thailand, Trinidad, Tobago and Uganda.The first Phase III trials began in USA in 1998 and Thailand in 1999 to assess the efficacy of the first generation of HIV vaccines.

The Ministry ofHealth and family Welfare and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU on 4th December, 2000, with the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) to promote and accelerate efforts to develop an indigenous AIDS vaccine that will address the strains of the HIV subtype C predominant in India.

The modified Vaccinia Ankara (MVA) based HIV vaccine is in developing stage involving innumerable complex and complicated steps. The MVA has not reached the stage of clinical trial.

Government encourages the Indian Pharmaceutical industry to continue to develop, refine and manufacture generic anti-retroviral drugs and to focus on making these more affordable by those who need them.